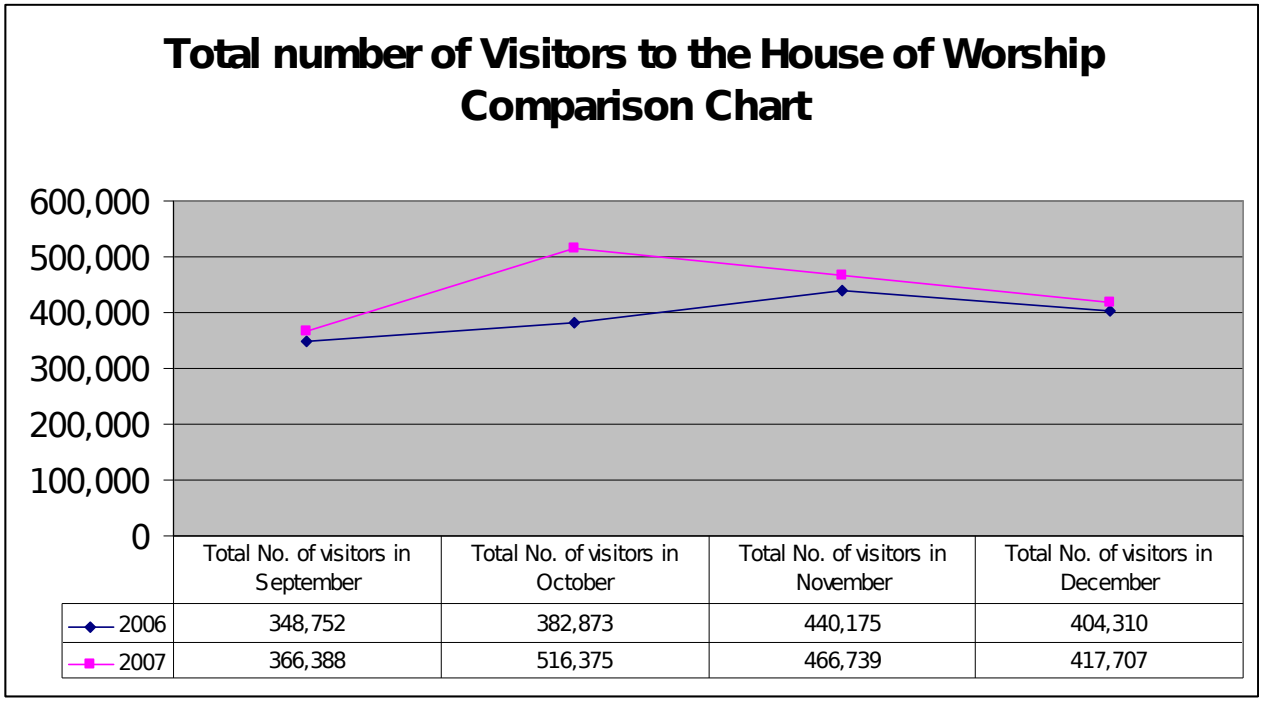
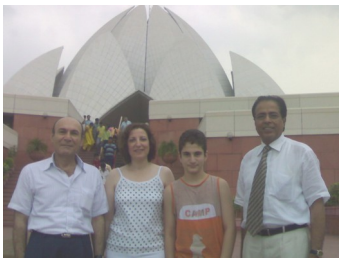
Visitors Report
September, October, November and December 2007
Bahá'í House of Worship, New Delhi



	Total No. of visitors in September	Total No. of visitors in October	Total No. of visitors in November	Total No. of visitors in December
2006	348,752	382,873	440,175	404,310
2007	366,388	516,375	466,739	417,707

Notable Visits:



The Ambassador of Lebanon to India H.E. **Mr. Khaled Salman** visited the House of Worship along with his family on 2nd September 2007.

On 26th September a **Polish delegation**, led by the Ambassador of Poland to India H.E. Mr. Majka, visited the House of Worship.

A group of 60 **Commonwealth Parliamentarians** visited the House of Worship and Information Centre on 26th September. Members were from many countries including South Africa, Scotland, St Helena, Canada, India, Uganda, and Sri Lanka. The group was shown an edited version of Jewel in the Lotus and then taken to the House of Worship where a prayer session had been arranged. The Parliamentarians were given special folders with

the Prosperity of Humankind publication, leaflets about the Bahá'í Faith, quotations from the Bahá'í Writings, and The Promise of World Peace included. Some five Parliamentarians provided their visiting cards specifically to enable the Bahá'í communities in their home countries to contact them upon their return amongst them were Scotland, Ottawa and Sri Lanka.

Ms. Sunita Williams, Indian-American NASA astronaut visited the House of Worship on 2nd October. A special prayer service was arranged for her and her family members. She later commented on how peaceful she felt during the service. Her father remarked that the acoustics of the House of Worship lent a new meaning to the readings from the Bhagvad Gita. He was very pleased and repeated the verses congratulating the volunteer who had chanted them. She was moved especially by the Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh displayed in the prayer hall. She was particularly moved by the Hidden Word,

"**O SON OF MAN! Wert thou to speed through the immensity of space and traverse the expanse of heaven, yet thou wouldst find no rest save in submission to Our command and humbleness before Our Face."** and connected it with her own space journey.

On 9th October the **Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare of Nepal, Mahendra Prasad Shrestha** visited the House of Worship. With the delegation was **Devi Adhikari of the Department of Rural Women's Development of Nepal.**

On 16th October **Singapore's Defence Minister, Hon. Mr. Teo Chee Hean** visited the House of Worship with a delegation of 10 Military and Embassy personnel. We informed him that the House of Worship was based on the principle of Oneness of God, Oneness of Religion, and Oneness of Mankind.

Ms Latha Munusamy, a volunteer from Malaysia, assisted the Office of Public Relations during the tour of the House of Worship. The delegation was charmed by her ability to speak Malay, a contributing factor to their positive experience.

Two visits to the House of Worship, on the 23rd and on the 26th of October, were arranged for a few of the high powered international directors of **McKinsey & Company** during their Directors' conference held in Delhi. The visits were organized by Mr. Pierre Avanzo who is a resident director with the Indian arm of the firm in Delhi.

On 9th November a delegation from Myanmar, including the **Minister for Social Welfare and Relief and Resettlement Hon Major Maung Maung Swe** and **Myanmar's Ambassador to India H.E. Mr U kyi Thein**, visited the House of Worsh ip and Information Centre.

On 13th November the **Advisor to the Prime Minister of Armenia on Religious Affairs Mr. Markosyan** was on a private visit to the House of Worship as a guest of Mrs. Zena Sorabjee.

The **Executive Secretary of the National Security Council of Mongolia Mr. P. Sundev** and his family visited the House of Worship and the Information Centre on 18th November. They savoured the silence and the contemplative atmosphere of the prayer hall and sat for many minutes meditating. They were very pleased to see the photographs of Mrs. Bayer, the First Lady of Mongolia's visit to the House of Worship four years ago. We also showed them photos of the Bahá'í community's socio-economic development work in Mongolia.

On 24th November the **Ambassador of Romania**, who has become a good friend of the House of Worship, accompanied the renowned **Romanian artiste Ms. Stela Popescu** to the House of Worship. Ms. Popescu was in Delhi for a performing tour of the city. She had been told about the portrait of Her Majesty Queen Marie of Romania on display at the Information Centre and was very eager to see it. She was surprised, however, to discover that the Queen was a Bahá'í.

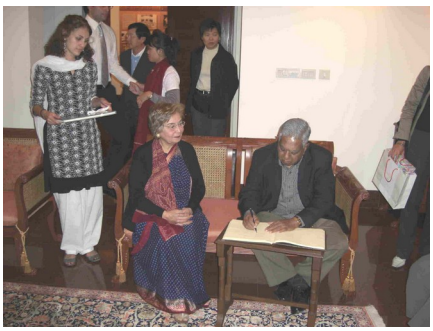
On 30th November the **State Minister of Education & Sports of Nepal, Hon. Mr. Mohan Singh Ralhour** visited the House of Worship along with **Bunu Shrestha the Joint Secretary of Education &**

Sports of Nepal. With them was the wife of the acting Ambassador of Nepal to India, **Mrs. Darpana Pokharel.**

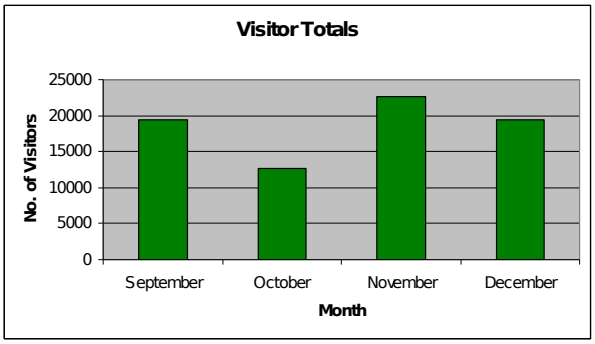
On 7th December the newly appointed **Colombian Ambassador to India H.E. Juan Alfredo Pintos** visited the House of Worship with his family and friend. He was extremely touched by the message of the Bahá'í Faith. He commented several times on the importance of accepting different perspectives and his appreciation that Bahá'ís shared this belief. The Ambassador was also impressed by the design of the House of Worship and the simplicity of the prayer hall being very conducive to silent meditation and prayer.

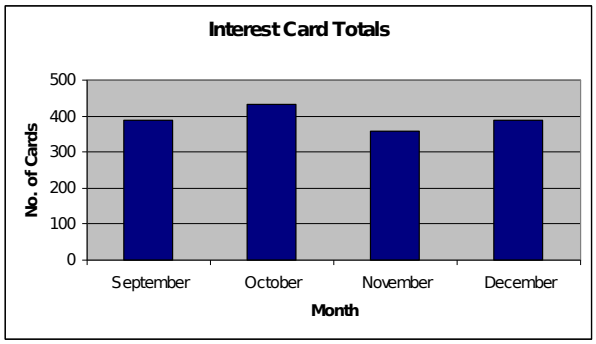
On 15th December, the **President of the Republic of Singapore Mr. S.R Nathan** visited the House of Worship with his wife, daughter, grandchildren and other family members. The delegation was accompanied by the High Commissioner of Singapore to India H.E. Mr. Eu Calvin Mun Hoo. The visit was arranged after the Defence Minister returned to Singapore and shared his wonderful experience at the House of Worship.

The President was received by Mrs. Zena Sorabjee and Dr. A K Merchant, Secretary General of the National Spiritual Assembly of India. A special multi-religious prayer service was arranged for the guests. After the service the President was escorted to the Information Centre and given a guided tour. The rest of the delegation walked to the Information Centre with Mrs. Nalina Jiwnani and volunteer Justin Scoffield who explained the purpose of the House of Worship and general information about the Bahá'í Faith. The entire group then enjoyed refreshments in the VIP Room of the Centre. The President then signed the visitors Book and exchanged gifts with Mrs. Zena Sorabjee.



Information Centre:





Pre-planned School Group visits: In response to the new initiative of inviting schools for an organised tour which includes a virtue based animated film 'Uncle Haathi', unity based activity such as a unity dance,

and a prayer service at the House of Worship So far five school-groups (junior and secondary), from Delhi have come in amongst them APJ School and Agdav Model Town School. Led by volunteers Lara Owen and Sina Rohani both from the United Kingdom, the children were taught a Bahá'í prayer, song about unity, and a step dance. The contribution of the volunteers in this new programme is invaluable. Their youth, their skills and their ability (often acquired from Junior Youth Programmes) bring about the perfect chemistry and the school children seem to enjoy the programmes. This prearranged organised school visit program aims to conduct formal visits for students in a structured manner to further enhance their experience and to take a better understanding of the House of Worship and its significance. Meanwhile the other regular visits of school groups continue. The latter are random visits with very limited time in hand, but can vary from 20 to 35 school groups in a week.

EVENTS:

Hindi Lecture series: A series of monthly Hindi lectures commenced in November 2007. The series aims to address the needs of many visitors to the House of Worship who enquire about activities and programmes such as 'discourses', 'spiritual, knowledge', 'religious, discussion' or simply an activity to stay connected with the House of Worship.

Inaugurating the Hindi Lecture Series at the Information Centre, Mr. Rajan Sawant delivered a talk on the "Dynamics of Spiritual Transformation" on 18th November. The talk was attended by over thirty participants. The December lecture was on "Religion's Role in Establishing Peace in the Future", and was presented by Dr. Sandeep Abrol on 9th Dec. A dose of spirituality on a Sunday afternoon.

The Delhi International Arts Festival: Neemrana Music Foundation presented both young Indian solo and choir singers from the Delhi Opera Ensemble and some singers from the Delhi Chamber Choir, in a

concert of spiritual music under the auspices of the Delhi International Arts Festival, at the Information Centre on 14th December. The program conducted by Gabriella Roda Rechner also featured the well known Delhi based soprano Situ Singh. The performance was held under the banner of ONE OCEAN. As is the practice, the audience was invited to the prayer hall of the House of Worship for a specially arranged multi-religious prayer service, after the concert.

Media

1st Nov, **Canal 13** TV crew from Chile filmed the House of Worship for a news item. They knew of the House of Worship coming up in Chile.

15th Nov, **TV Com** (regional channel) in Russia, filmed the House of Worship for a programme on religions of India.

16th Nov, **L' Officiel** a fashion magazine in India interviewed and took photos of Mrs. Zena Sorabjee for their January issue which is to focus on faith/ spirituality. They are to include several key people and their faiths in this issue.

The **Incredible India** magazine is to feature and article on the Bahá'í Faith for their January issue. They have a circulation of 53,000 world wide.

7th Dec, **Tetris World Com** a film production company were doing a feature for promoting tourism to Delhi in West Bengal. The show will be telecast in Akash Bangla channel.

9th Dec A researcher from **South Korean Broadcasting Corporation, MBC** filmed the House of Worship for a 3 hour documentary on India. One hour of the show will feature religions in India and this will include the segments of the Bahá'í Faith and the House of Worship. They used Heli- Cams to take overhead shots of the House of Worship.

28th Dec**, Jess Firth** an independent film- maker from New Zealand based in London filmed the House of Worship as a part of his film on the Bahá'í faith from an outsider's perspective. The purpose of this film is to explore a 24 year old's journey to discover what it means to be Bahá'í. The film follows Jess's journey and personal encounters of discovering what the Bahá'í Faith is all about through visiting and meeting Bahá'ís at the World Centre in Haifa, the House of Worship in India, and the Bahá'í office at the United Nations in New York.

Prepared by the Office of Public Relations